

# **LETTUCE AND ROMAINE HARVESTING MACHINE AND METHOD**

## **ABSTRACT**

A produce harvesting apparatus of the invention includes a conveyor system having conveyor belt driven over rollers by a drive element. The belt includes cushioned produce holders suitable for maintaining produce products in a desired orientation on the belt during operation. The apparatus includes a coring station suitable for coring harvested lettuce. The apparatus includes a loading station wherein the cored lettuce is loaded onto the cushioned produce holders and carried to an application station where shelf life extending materials are applied to the cut portions of the lettuce. The processed lettuce then proceeds to an unloading station where it is removed from the conveyor belt. Other inventive aspects include the conveyor belt having cushioned produce holders and the coring station as well as methods of implementing the disclosed devices.